

MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY

Board of Governors Minutes

March 13, 2026

BSC Boardroom

The March 13, 2026, meeting of the Missouri Southern State University Board of Governors was called to order by Chairman Carlos Haley. Governors in attendance were Carlos Haley, Anita Oplotnik, Alison Hershewe, Mariann Morgan, Rod Hendricks, T. Mark Elliott, and Michael Seibert.

Others in attendance included Dr. Dean Van Galen, Dr. Lisa Toms, Dr. Shellie Hewitt, Linda Eis, Michelle Wood/ Rob Mallory, Dr. Nicole Shoaf, Leona Belk, Peter Edwards, Yulissa Gomez-Delgado, and Diana Follmer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Carlos Haley congratulated Governor T. Mark Elliott and Governor Dr. Benjamin Rosenberg for being reappointed by Governor Mike Kehoe to serve on Missouri Southern State University's Board of Governors. He also announced that Ms. Morgan Robinson would be stepping down as Student Representative and thanked her for her time, attention and student perspective that she has given. Governor Haley then welcomed Ms. Yulissa Gomez-Delgado and congratulated her on being appointed to the Student Representative position by Governor Kehoe. Ms. Gomez-Delgado is currently involved in several university-sponsored organizations and is pursuing a bachelor's degree in business administration at Missouri Southern State University.

MINUTES

Chairman Haley asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the January 9, 2026, Board meeting, none were noted.

A motion was made by Governor Rod Hendricks and seconded by Governor Michael Seibert to approve the minutes of January 9, 2026, Board meeting as submitted.

Motion passed unanimously (minutes are archived in the permanent record book).

President Dr. Dean Van Galen:

Note: Highlights of Dr. Van Galen's report are summarized below. Additional details are provided in the handout distributed to the Board, which is attached to the official minutes in the permanent record book.

Board Appointment Recognition

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President Dean Van Galen joined the Board in congratulating Yulissa GomezDelgado on her appointment to the Board of Governors by Governor Kehoe. He stated that he has had the opportunity to get to know Ms. Gomez-Delgado during her time on campus and has observed her leadership and service. He expressed confidence in her ability to serve as a strong representative for students as a member of the Board.

Athletics

President Van Galen congratulated the men's and women's basketball teams on their performance during the season and at the MIAA Tournament in Kansas City. He noted that, for the first time since 2002, both teams advanced to the semifinal round of the tournament. He further noted that in the preseason media poll, the men's team was ranked 13th and the women's team 9th out of 14 teams, and both teams exceeded expectations.

President Van Galen also recognized the softball team, reporting a record of 21 wins and three losses and a current national ranking of fourth.

Lions Forward Campaign

President Van Galen reported that the Lions Forward campaign surpassed its \$42.7 million goal in late January, achieving this milestone with 17 months remaining in the five-year campaign. He stated that this level of support reflects strong confidence in the university's mission and impact.

He expressed appreciation to advancement staff and volunteer leaders, including campaign co-chairs Dot Willcoxon and Bill and Tracy Gipson.

Southwest Missouri Day

President Van Galen reported that Missouri Southern will have a prominent presence at the Southwest Missouri Day at the Capitol in Jefferson City on April 21. He noted that the university will highlight the importance of Missouri Southern to the people and communities and will highlight our unique statewide mission and regional impact through interactive displays.

Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center Opening

President Van Galen reported that the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center is scheduled for August 13, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. He noted that the project represents a \$48.2 million investment supported by state, local, federal, and private partners.

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Student Success Example

President Van Galen concluded by sharing an example of student success. He reported that during an alumni event in Washington, D.C., he and Interim Vice President of Advancement, Michelle Wood met alumna Delia Gilbert, who completed her degree in environmental health and safety in 2020. He noted that she is currently employed as an environmental health officer with the U.S. Public Health Service and credited faculty, including Dr. Teresa Bowman, for contributing to her success.

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Report - Dr. Lisa Toms:

Note: Highlights of Dr. Toms's report are summarized below. Additional details are provided in the handout distributed to the Board, which is attached to the official minutes in the permanent record book.

Teacher Education Program

The annual performance report for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education indicated that the program exceeds the state average in all nine areas of the Missouri Educator Evaluation System. Program completers have increased by 32% since 2022/ compared to a 1 5.6% decrease statewide,

Dress to Impress

The 1 2th annual Dress to Impress event was held on February 25/ 2026/ serving 458 students and alumni. The event provides professional attire to students at no cost.

Career Fair

The 2026 Career Fair was held during the week in Billingsley Student Center, with participation from 84 employers representing local and regional organizations.

Public Safety and Forensic Science Institute

The ribbon cutting for the MSSU Public Safety and Forensic Science Institute was held on February 26/ 2026. The facility provides hands-on training with drones, 3D scanning equipment, handheld alternate light sources and other industry-relevant technology.

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Environmental Health and Safety Program

The Environmental Health and Safety Program received reaffirmation of accreditation from the Board of Certified Safety Professionals, allowing graduates to earn the Graduate Safety Practitioner designation.

Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer Report -- Ms. Linda Eis:

Note: Highlights of Ms. Eis/s report are summarized below. Additional details are provided in the handout distributed to the Board, which is attached to the official minutes in the permanent record book.

FY27 Budget

Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer Linda Eis reported that during the week of February 23, 2026, the President's Cabinet hosted six informational sessions for faculty and staff regarding development of the FY27 budget. She noted that the sessions included information on institutional revenues, expenditures, and alignment with the university's mission, and commitment to our students, and that updates will continue as the budget process progresses.

Mayes Student Life Center

Ms. Eis reported that the renovation project has been awarded to Construction Services Group (CSG) and began on March 9, 2026/ with anticipated completion in August 2026.

Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center

Ms. Eis reported that ongoing work includes interior finishes, signage, equipment installation, and preparation for final inspections. She noted that coordination with departments, Facility Services, Information Technology and Financial Services is underway for relocation of departments into the facility.

Leggett & Platt Athletic Center

Ms. Eis reported that Phase 1 of the project is nearing completion, including installation of new basketball court flooring, which requires a curing period prior to use. She noted that commencement ceremonies are expected to return to the facility for spring 2026.

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She further reported that Phase 2 is proceeding, supported by a philanthropic gift, and will include painting, installation of a videoboard and sound system, new scorer tables, and restroom updates.

Presentation of the financial statements for the period ending February 26, 2026

Cash Graph:

Ms. Eis noted the cash balance for February 28, 2026, was \$25.2M. This is a decrease over the previous year of \$650k. Statement of Net Position: Total Assets: \$228M

Total Liabilities: \$128M

Net Position: \$100M

Accounts Receivable: Reflects the activity at the beginning of the semester. Financial Aid is disbursed and student accounts are paid.

Comparative Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position (difference column):

- Total Operating Revenues: \$94M decrease.
- Total Operating Expenses: \$1.6M increase. This includes Health Insurance from increased claim activity \$828k, other Benefits (\$208k), MOSERS 3025%, Scholarships (\$1.1M) and Repair and Maintenance projects (\$1M).
- Non-Operating Revenues: \$639k decrease. This includes State appropriations of an additional \$303k offset by Pell (\$739k).
- Income Before Other Revenues:

Current Year: \$5.4M increase

Prior Year: \$4.5M increase

Additional increase: \$879k

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- Other Revenues: \$3.4M increase. This continues to reflect state capital appropriations and capital gifts for the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center as well as gifts for the Leggett & Platt project.

A motion was made by Governor Anita Oplotnik and seconded by Governor T. Mark Elliott to approve the February 2026 financial statements as presented Motion passed unanimously. (A copy of the financial statements for February 2026 is attached to the minutes in the permanent record book).

Vice President for University Advancement Report -a Ms. Michelle Wood:

Note: Highlights of Ms. Wood's report are summarized below. Additional details are provided in the handout distributed to the Board, which is attached to the official minutes in the permanent record book.

Lions Forward Campaign Progress

Vice President for University Advancement Michelle Wood reported that the Lions Forward Capital Campaign has engaged more than 3,200 donors. The campaign includes 11 commitments of \$1 million or more and 319 leadership-level gifts of \$25,000 or greater. She noted that approximately 40% of campaign commitments are estate gifts.

Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center

Ms. Wood reported that 32 naming opportunities for the Roy Blunt Health Science Innovation Center have been secured, with 16 opportunities remaining. She also reported that the Lion Pride Giving Challenge raised more than \$91,000 from 334 donors, with more than \$80,000 designated for athletics and the remaining funds supporting art, music, and theatre programs.

Willcoxon Innovation in Health Sciences Summit

Ms. Wood reported that the Willcoxon Health Science Summit is scheduled for March 27, 2026, with 390 individuals registered and expected attendance exceeding 400 participants. She noted that this represents the third consecutive year of increased participation and includes attendance from Joplin High School health occupation students and MOSO CAPS students.

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Statewide Mission Expansion and Events

Ms. Wood reported that the Advancement team continues to support statewide mission expansion through events, communications, outreach, and engagement initiatives. She highlighted upcoming events including the Lantern Society Dinner on April 17, 2026, at the Nexus Event Center in Webb City, an Herbarium ribbon cutting on March 23, 2026, and the Humphrey Scholarship Dinner on April 9, 2026.

Associate Vice President of Admissions and Enrollment Report - Dr. Shellie Hewitt:

Note: Highlights of Dr. Hewitt's report are summarized below. Additional details are provided in the handout that was distributed to the Board, which is attached to the official minutes in the permanent record book.

Recruitment and Retention Strategy

Associate Vice President of Admissions and Enrollment Dr. Shellie Hewitt reported that fall recruitment strategy integrates recruitment and retention efforts with a focus on improving first-year persistence and long-term enrollment stability. She identified three primary initiatives: Meta Major expansion, dual credit conversion strategy, and reimagined Lion Pride visit days.

Meta Major Initiatives

Dr. Hewitt reported that Meta Majors are designed to support students who are undecided about their academic pathway by reducing uncertainty and improving clarity. Admissions counselors have been trained to incorporate Meta Majors into recruitment discussions. She noted that students transition seamlessly to continued exploratory advising through the Student Success Center upon matriculation.

Dual Credit Conversion Strategy

Dr. Hewitt reported that dual credit conversion remains a key growth opportunity. She outlined strategies including increased in-person engagement, enhanced communication through email and text messaging, targeted parent outreach, and strengthened relationships with dual credit instructors. She also

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reported the introduction of the Corely Dual Credit Scholarship to support continued enrollment of dual credit students at Missouri Southern.

Lion Pride Visit Days

Dr. Hewitt reported that Lion Pride visit days are being redesigned to align with the university's statewide mission. Enhancements include discipline-specific academic experiences, increased faculty interaction, expanded facility tours, and a focus on health and life sciences. She noted additional emphasis on student support services, student engagement opportunities, and structured event conclusions with clear next steps for prospective students.

Dr. Hewitt reported that recruitment messaging is aligned with retention strategies, integrating student exploration, engagement, and support to improve enrollment outcomes and first-year persistence.

Director of Athletics Report - Rob Mallory:

Note: Highlights of Mr. Mallory's report are summarized below. Additional details are provided in the handout that was distributed to the Board, which is attached to the official minutes in the permanent record book

NCAA Updates

Director of Athletics Rob Mallory reported that the NCAA Division II Convention was held in Washington, D.C. He noted that the proposed five-season eligibility model was not voted on and was referred back for further review based on recommendations from the Division II Executive Board, Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, and legal counsel.

Mr. Mallory reported that the NCAA Power Index was approved as the sole metric for championship selection and that women's flag football was established as an emerging sport.

Athletics Highlights

Mr. Mallory reported that the women's basketball team achieved 20 wins during the season, marking the fourth occurrence in the past five years. He noted that the program had achieved this milestone only once in the previous 25 years,

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He reported that the track and field programs placed in the top five at the MIAA indoor championships and that 10 student-athletes qualified for national competition.

Mr. Mallory reported that softball student-athlete Katie Gray set program records for career home runs and runs batted in, and that Head Coach Hallie Blackney earned her 200th career victory.

Lion Pride Giving Challenge

Mr. Mallory reported that the Lion Pride Giving Challenge has raised more than \$300,000 over three years, with more than 800 gifts. He expressed appreciation for collaboration with the University Advancement Office.

Faculty Senate Report - Dr. Nicole Shoaf:

Note: Highlights of Dr. Shoaf's report are summarized below. Additional details are provided in the handout that was distributed to the Board, which is attached to the official minutes in the permanent record book.

Dr. Nicole Shoaf reported that Faculty Senate is preparing for the end of the academic year. She noted that recommendations for updates to Chapter 2 of the Faculty Handbook will be voted on at the next meeting.

Dr. Shoaf reported that a new Outstanding Service Award has been established for faculty, with nominations accepted through April 15, 2026.

She also reported that a recommendation has been submitted to implement a feedback process for department chairs.

Dr. Shoaf reported that Faculty Senate elections will occur in May and that Dr. Zackary Rice will serve as Faculty Senate President for the next academic year.

Staff Senate Report - Ms. Leona Belk:

Note: Highlights of Dr. Goads report are summarized below. Additional details are provided in the handout that was distributed to the Board, which is attached to the official minutes in the permanent record book.

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Ms. Leona Bell< presented the report on behalf of Staff Senate President Dr. Stephanie Goad.

Ms. Bell< reported that the Staff Senate Communications Committee is developing a list of local businesses offering discounts or cost-saving opportunities for employees.

She reported that a campus cleanup project is scheduled for April and that staff engagement initiatives include monthly "Craft Tea" events, and an upcoming plant exchange event in the Spiva Library.

Ms. Bell< also reported that the Swap Shop, located in the Lion Co-op, is open weekly and provides free items to faculty and staff.

Student Representative Report - Yulissa Gomez-Delgado:

Student Representative, Yulissa Gomez-Delgado, reported on recent campus events, including Dress to Impress, which received positive student feedback and provided professional attire for interviews.

She reported that the "Sodas with DVG" event generated positive engagement and that students expressed appreciation for opportunities to interact with university leadership.

Ms. Gomez-Delgado reported that Wellness Weel< included strong student participation and that the Career Fair had high attendance and representation from employers and graduate programs.

She reported that campus vibrancy remains a topic of discussion among students, with suggestions including improved campus lighting and expanded outdoor study spaces.

Ms. Gomez-Delgado highlighted upcoming events including the Willcoxon Health Summit on March 27, 2026, and the production of Talley's Folly. She also reported on

student engagement initiatives, including a Student Senate Easter Egg Hunt fundraiser, a proposed student mural/ and potential expansion of late-night recreational programming.

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Board Committee Reports

Ad Hoc Committee on Campus Vibrancy and Engagement - Michael Seibert, Chair:

Chair Michael Seibert reported that the committee held its second meeting. Dr. Toms presented information on course modality trends and retention rates. The committee discussed potential initiatives for the 2026-2028 academic years and plans to meet once more before the end of the term.

Personnel/Compensation Committee - TO Mark Elliott, Chair:

Chair T. Mark Elliott reported that the committee did not meet.

Academic Affairs Committee Mariann Morgan, Chair:

Chair Mariann Morgan reported that the committee met, but no report was presented.

Budget and Audit Committee -- Michael Seibert, Chair:

Chair Michael Seibert reported that the committee reviewed the FY 27 state higher education budget and received financial updates from Ms. Linda Eis. He reported that discussion also included the FY27 university budget and anticipated fiscal challenges.

Governor Seibert further reported that a University Facilities Roadmap was presented by Jeff Bowman, outlining current facility needs, associated financial impacts, and potential cost-saving opportunities.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

A motion was made by Governor Rod Hendrick and seconded by Governor Anita Oplotnik to adjourn.

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Chair: 

Board C

Board Secretary: 

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